

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 2, 2014

The Honorable Mark Pryor
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt:

We respectfully ask that you fully fund the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the Fiscal Year 2015 Agriculture Appropriations bill and assure the WIC contingency fund is adequately funded. Fully funding WIC ensures that no eligible applicants are turned away and that the program has the funds to ensure timely and responsible program management.

WIC is the nation's premiere preventive public health nutrition program serving nearly 9 million low income mothers and young children at nutritional risk. Numerous studies show that WIC saves money by improving birth outcomes and reducing pre-term and low birth weight babies. For example, for every dollar spent on a pregnant woman in WIC, up to \$4.21 is saved in Medicaid for her and her newborn baby. Since 1997, Appropriators of both parties have recognized the great value WIC adds to the nation's nutritional health and ensured that WIC has had sufficient funding to serve all eligible mothers and young children who apply.

We also request that you provide the following set asides, which will ultimately contribute to increased program integrity and long-term deficit reduction:

- \$96.2 million in set aside funding for breastfeeding peer counselors and breastfeeding support services;
- \$32.07 million in management information systems (MIT) and electronic service delivery systems (EBT) funding;
- \$14.96 million in infrastructure funding; and
- \$5 million for research

In addition to providing healthy foods, WIC provides critical health and social service referrals. As a result, children enrolled in WIC are more likely to be immunized on time, consume key nutrients, and have higher cognitive development scores than their peers not participating in WIC. Breastfeeding rates among WIC women are at record highs—63% initiation and 20% at 6 months. Removing families from the program as a result of funding cuts deprives young children of access to healthy food, a healthy start in life, and the opportunity to thrive.

We strongly urge you to fully fund WIC in the FY 2015 Agriculture Appropriations bill so they may continue to protect low-income mothers, infants, and children from hunger and improve their ability to access nutritious, balanced diets.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



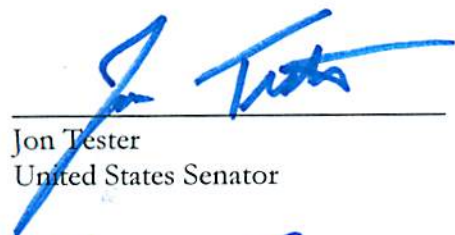
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



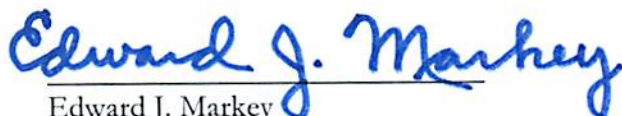
Al Franken
United States Senator



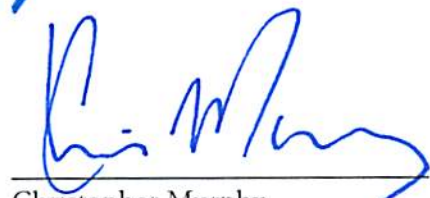
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



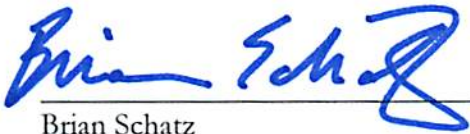
Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
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Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



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United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Tom Harkin
United States Senator



John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



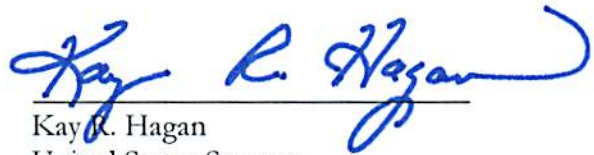
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Carl Levin
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Kay R. Hagan
United States Senator